

Project Development Time Frame – prepared by Carl Wilcox, DFG, October 2007

Design:

1. Clear definition of the Project: 1 to 12 months depending upon complexity of project and amount of modeling, biological investigation, and other work needed to design a project that can begin the environmental review process.
2. Participation of interested stakeholders including coordination with permitting agencies and science review. Ongoing, needed to make sure affected parties (land owners, water users, environmental groups, regulators) are able to provide input into the project to minimize subsequent opposition.

Permitting

3. Environmental Review: 6 to 18 months (or longer) depending on the complexity of the project. If NEPA is involved often longer due to added requirements for public review and comment on final document and the protracted noticing requirements. Some of this time can occur concurrent with 1, although you need a defined project to evaluate, so that work must be completed before CEQA/NEPA can begin.
4. Permitting: 3 to 12 months depending on complexity of the projects and the authorizations needed, (404, 401, Waste Discharge Requirements, CESA, ESA, BCDC, DPC). Permits cannot be issued until Environmental Review has been completed. Some work can occur concurrently through the Design and Stakeholder process. In many cases regulatory agencies are understaffed and have many other projects to handle so processing times is extended due to workload limitations.

Implementation (Construction)

5. Implementation: Final Design (1 to 6 months) and contract bidding (4 -6 months) and management. Final Design needs to wait until permits are completed to assure that project components are not changed as part of the environmental review and permitting process. Bidding and contracting must await final design. Construction may be restricted to certain time frames to minimize construction impacts, these can often delay initiation or extend the time of construction, (effect depends on the project and its effects the environment triggering such restrictions)

Bottom line: Most of the projects that have been identified as interim actions (“No Regrets”, Eco Crescent, channel barriers) are 18 months to 3 years from implementation. Projects like Dutch Slough which has an admin. DEIR is probably 18 months from implementation under the best of circumstances.

Permit Processing Overview and Timelines

	1 mo.	2 mo.	3 mo.	4 mo.	5 mo.	6 mo.	7 mo.	8 mo.	9 mo.	10 mo.	11 mo.	12 mo.	13 mo.	14 mo.	15 mo.	16 mo.	
State																	
CEQA - NOP	Initial Study	NOP	Neg.Dec.	Public Review	Prepare Final ND		NOD	30 day appeal period									
CEQA - EIR	Initial Study	NOP	Draft ND/EIR	Public Review		Response to Comment		Prepare Final EIR	Public Review		NOD and Cert.						
CESA	DFG cannot begin CESA process until lead agency has completed CEQA							Consultation	Submit App.	Agency Review		CEQA Findings	NOD	Issue Take Permit			
CA Lands Commission											Commission Review occurs after CEQA/CESA final						
Reclamation Board											Reclamation Board Review occurs after CEQA/CESA complete						
BCDC, DPC, RWQCB and other regulatory. auth. approval																	
1600 SAA	Streambed Alteration Agreement takes approximately 60 after complete application is received, CEQA process and Water Board 401 certification can extend this timeline.																
Federal																	
NEPA - FONSI	Notice of Intent	Agency/ Public Review		Enviro. Assess.	Prepare FONSI	Release FONSI											
NEPA - EIS	Notice of Intent	Scoping/Consultation		Prepare Draft EIS		Notice of Availability	Federal Register	Public Review	Prepare Final EIS			Public Review		ROD			
FESA	Early Consultation/Surveys/Data Gathering			Submit Application/Initiate Consultation		Interagency Consultation/collect data		Prepare Biological Opinion			Release Biol.Op.						
Clean Water Act 404								ACOE Pre-ap Mtg.	Project redesign to incorp. BO issued			Agency Comment	Submit final App.	Final Permit			
Local-Grading, Ag. Impact fees, etc.	Coordination with local agencies regarding local land use designation, potential impacts, local regulations should occur as early as possible after project is defined.																
The above timelines are "best case scenario." They assume that the project is clearly defined, preliminary design has been completed, and the project is non-controversial. Additional time would be necessary for complex projects, stakeholder involvement, local coordination, disput resolution processes, document preparation and revision, biological, cultural, archeological, and other surveys, Environmental Justice review, and projects which cross jurisdictional boundaries. Fund availability, budgeting and contracting processing also increase timelines. All of these considerations could extend the process a year or more. Timelines are often extended due to limited agency staffing, large permit backlogs and incomplete submittals at the time of application. CEQA and NEPA can run parallel tracks, as can FESA and CESA. If the applicant is requesting a consistency determination, that state must wait for the final BO before proceeding with the CD.																	